



Your Website Coach



It's All About the Trust – 3/8/07

So who can you trust these days? I recently spoke with Leslie Fisher (bogartsgifts.com), who told me a story that I've heard many times before but the names and places were different:

Bogart's Gifts had their first website developed a few years ago by a "kid in his basement". It was an informational site that served its purpose. About 2 years ago, Leslie was approached by ACME Webs (no, not a real name) and was told that they would improve her site. They had some Big Name clients, but the timing wasn't right so she declined. Last year, she was again approached by ACME and this time, she knew the sales representative from other circles. The initial focus of ACME was on search engine optimization, but they also did e-commerce and Leslie needed that more. So she signed up, wrote a check and the nightmare began. Two weeks after she signed up, her sales representative left ACME and Leslie spent the next *11 months* trying to get ACME to honor their contract with her. There was a complete breakdown in communication that was exacerbated by the 20 yr. old project manager assigned to her. Leslie said, "I never before felt like such a non-client. I felt like I was bugging them **while** I was paying them...The web developer needs to take an actual interest in the client. They need to understand how the client's business works."

Use Leslie's story and these tips to prevent your own bad story. **Avoid the Hard Sell.** You really need to ask "What is their motivation?" They looked long and hard into their hearts and felt you were the chosen one? I don't think so... **Find Out Who is Doing the Work.** In most cases, the sales rep knows very little about how things happen behind the scenes. Usually, they work from a script, not from a true understanding of the project. **Talk to Current Clients.** If they won't let you, don't do business with them. If they don't have a portfolio, that's a problem too. **Get a Timeline.** If you aren't seeing results when you should (**and** you have done your part in supplying content) you need to act immediately. And finally, **Get All of It in Writing.**

Update: Julie Magro (MagroInternational.com) read last month's column and pointed out the following: 1) Businesses can benefit from signing up for a profile now while they still have a choice of URLs - even if they don't plan to use it right away; 2) Search engines crawl MySpace, which makes it one more place to be "found". Thank you, Julie, those are good points.

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